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September Is Healthy Family Meals Month

(Clearfield, Utah) – Governor Gary Herbert has proclaimed September as Healthy Family Meals Month. Family meal time is one of the most important ways parents can connect with their kids and help them feel supported and trusted.

The Davis County Health Department encourages families to make time to eat together. Even eating a few meals a week together can make a positive difference in a child's life physically, academically, socially and mentally.

Brian Hatch, director of Davis County's health department said, "On average, parents spend only 15 minutes of each day talking to their child. Family meal time is an opportunity to increase that time and have meaningful conversations that will help your child thrive in all aspects of life."

"Utah State University Extension reports children from families who eat together five or more times a week generally eat more fruits and vegetables and are more likely to make healthy choices when they are on their own," said Marcie Clark, a health educator with the department. "They are better able to manage negative emotions and learn appropriate ways to share thoughts, feelings, and opinions."

Other long-term benefits include better grades in school, a larger vocabulary, and decreasing the likelihood of drug and alcohol use.

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“Get the most out of your bonding time and make family meal time a success by turning off the television and other devices,” Clark said. “Involve the whole family in meal planning, preparing foods, and clean-up.”

For healthy recipes and tips on making family meal time a success, visit USU Extension’s website at <https://extension.usu.edu/foodsense/> and Utah Family Meals Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/utahfamilymeals>.

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